



VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 6, 2018

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

SB 284 An Act Concerning Benefits for Certain Veterans Who Have Been Diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury or Who Have Had an Experience of Military Sexual Trauma

CCM has concerns with SB 284.

SB 284 would expand certain benefits currently available to Veterans' that have completed their military service and have received an honorable discharge to former service members who received general or other than honorable (OTH) discharges if they have a "qualifying condition." These conditions would include having been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or having been the victim of military sexual trauma (MST).

While this proposal is well intended it will result in the expansion of an unfunded mandate on towns and cities. CCM has been unable to determine the scope of this expansion and would ask the Committee to obtain a detailed fiscal analysis before the bill is considered for a vote.

It is also unclear as to how this bill would be implemented, and more specifically from a municipal perspective, how local officials, such as a tax assessor, would determine whether an OTH discharge met the "qualifying conditions" as described in the bill. Would the State Department of Veterans Affairs be able to provide verifying documentation that a person with an OTH discharge met these conditions?

CCM is willing to work with the committee and the advocates of SB 284 in order to ensure the bill is limited in scope to those deserving of post service benefits and does not place more pressure on an already overburdened property tax system that contains more than 77 current mandated tax exemptions.



If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins of CCM at rcollins@ccm-ct.org or (860) 707-6446 or (860).